



PRESS RELEASE

Afghanistan Government and Partners sign Historic Declaration based on new study to save thousands of women and child lives

KABUL, 12 May 2014 - The Government of Afghanistan today officially signed the Kabul Declaration for Maternal and Child Health, a pledge by government, United Nations agencies, civil society and donors to implement cost-effective, high-impact interventions that will save the lives of more than 35,000 children over the next five years.

The Declaration also includes a commitment to improve government accountability, through a quarterly performance review of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health using the new *Call to Action* scorecards.

"The Government of Afghanistan has made an unprecedented promise to improve the health and save the lives of mothers and children in the country," said H.E. Firozuddin Feroz, Afghanistan's Minister of Public Health. "The Kabul Declaration is our commitment to make this a reality," said Dr. Feroz.

Addressing the conference, Dr. Nasrin Oryakhil the Minister for Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled said, "We applaud the Ministry of Public Health for this momentous leap towards accountability. We look forward to seeing the gains for Afghan mothers and children in the coming years."

The Declaration includes targeted commitments to:

- Reduce unmet need for family planning by 10%
- Increase quality skilled birth attendance to at least 60%
- Increase essential and emergency care of sick newborns to at least 50%
- Increase national vaccination coverage to at least 90%
- Increase coverage of interventions to prevent and manage pneumonia and diarrhea to at least 60%
- Increase treatment of severe acute malnutrition by 50%, and equip at least 50% of health workers with skills in nutrition counselling;

UNICEF Representative Akhil Iyer said, "New evidence presented at this conference has shown that simple solutions, such as increasing current vaccination coverage and the addition of new vaccines can save the lives of more than 14,000 children per year; and that an increase in deliveries with skilled birth attendance can prevent more than 3,000 stillbirths by 2020. We must now take action," said Mr. Iyer.

"The data speaks for itself and demonstrates what specific interventions need to be added, improved or scaled up to help us reach our goal by 2020. Today, we have pledged to take collective responsibility to put this commitment into tangible actions and results over the next five years," said William Hammink, Mission Director of United States Agency for International Development.

The Declaration is the culmination of three days' deliberations at the 'Call to Action' conference, where policy makers and experts examined new data and agreed on the key interventions required to reduce mother and child deaths by 2020.

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Notes to the editor:

The Progress Scorecards can be found at www.calltoactionafghanistan.org The full text of the Kabul Declaration will be added.

Highlights, quotes and resources from the conference can also be found on the Call to Action [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages.

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